



Security Council

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Letter dated 15 December 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

As requested by the Security Council in paragraph 10 of its resolution [2378 \(2017\)](#), I have the honour to submit my recommendations on a mechanism to fill capability gaps, including through more effective and efficient training and capacity-building with respect to peacekeeping operations. Please find enclosed my recommendations on filling those gaps (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) António Guterres



Annex to the letter dated 15 December 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Introduction

1. The present annex is being issued pursuant to Security Council resolution [2378 \(2017\)](#), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to provide updates to the Security Council on the continuous efforts made in filling the existing gaps in terms of force generation and capabilities as well as other relevant aspects necessary for peacekeeping to effectively and appropriately respond to peace and security challenges and to provide recommendations to the Security Council on a mechanism to fill those gaps, including through more effective and efficient training and capacity-building. As it falls in the midst of our ongoing discussions with Member States related to my reform proposals, particularly with respect to the peace and security architecture and management reforms, adjustments will be made if necessary to the initiatives and recommendations contained herein to take into account the decisions of Member States on my larger reform proposals.

2. The United Nations is fortunate to be able to count on uniformed contributions from more than 120 Member States to its peacekeeping missions. Member States select, vet, train and deploy their officers, soldiers and police to participate in peacekeeping and strive to meet the requirements we set for equipment, training and overall performance. Despite those efforts, however, gaps in capacities and capabilities persist in some missions. To address them, the Secretariat, in cooperation with Member States, has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve the force generation processes and to better support the training efforts of troop and police contributors. Specific measures, including guidance on military and police unit standards, new training materials and enhanced targeted training support, are described in greater detail below, followed by a set of recommendations to further consolidate and increase the impact of the progress that those activities have made in improving the overall performance of the uniformed component of our peacekeeping missions.

Existing gaps

Force generation and capabilities

3. United Nations peacekeeping missions perform multiple, interdependent and sometimes new tasks in often harsh and remote operating environments that require secure camps, good air and ground mobility, appropriate medical support, strong and secure supply chains, durable equipment and self-sustainability. As the Security Council has pointed out, United Nations peacekeeping missions must be provided with the right capabilities, delivered at the right time in order to fully implement mandates and meet the challenges they confront today and those that lie ahead. We can no longer rely heavily on a small number of overburdened contributors of police and military personnel, but must continue to strive to ensure a diverse mix of contributors that provides the right capabilities to and increases the flexibility of peacekeeping, while retaining the legitimacy drawn from having a wide range of contributors.

4. In order to adapt to the evolving operational realities and address the versatility of threats, missions require different capabilities at different periods in their life cycle. Mission concepts of operations will be reassessed continually, and force compositions and operational plans will need to be adjusted. In this context, it is indispensable that troop- and police-contributing countries remain flexible and adaptable in the

capabilities they provide and the time frame in which they provide them. The generation of capabilities for United Nations peacekeeping cannot focus solely on the type of equipment or the number of personnel being sought. Rather, it focuses increasingly on all of the factors that lead to effective performance, including agility, training, equipment, technology, doctrine, leadership, discipline, interoperability, welfare and mindset, and gender balance, as well as the absence of operational caveats. More complex and sometimes more dangerous operations require strengthened communications, situational awareness, interoperability between units and force protection.

5. What is needed are the right capabilities, not only the available ones. Specialized and high-performing capabilities are in short supply, particularly helicopters and enablers in such areas as medical services, specialized engineering tasks, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and efforts to counter improvised explosive devices; rapidly deployable capabilities; women; and French-speaking peacekeepers. Likewise, well-targeted and sustained training and capacity-building programmes that meet our standards are as important as ever.

6. While all missions have capabilities that can and should be strengthened, two missions continue to experience specific gaps. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is lacking one medium armed utility helicopter unit and one medium utility helicopter unit and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has not yet deployed a transport company and a special forces company for the regional protection force. Challenges relating to the timely deployment of capabilities, particularly for such missions as UNMISS, are also associated with the consent and capacity of the host government. It is critical that the members of the Security Council engage collectively and individually to ensure that host governments comply fully with status-of-mission agreements and that the Council act accordingly when host governments fail to do so.

Key capability areas

7. Despite the new pledges made at recent high-level meetings and the engagement of Member States, some areas of critical capability will require the sustained support and contributions of Member States:

- **High-mobility units**, which are agile and offer greater flexibility to the Force Commander and Police Commissioner, are increasingly required for the protection of civilians and mission personnel.
- **Improved situational awareness**, through both assets and qualified, expert personnel, is a necessity in our missions given the dangerous environments we operate in, and will only become more important.
- **High-quality enabling units** for tasks in such areas as airfield support, explosive ordnance, transport, specialized engineering, medical services and aviation are particularly necessary given that the areas of operation for peacekeeping missions are frequently underdeveloped, with limited transportation and infrastructure and scarce local resources.
- **Force protection, along with defensive measures and assets to safeguard camps**, is needed in such missions as MINUSMA, where we need measures to counter improvised explosive devices and indirect fire attacks. Better training is required in this area, both before deployment and in-mission.
- **The ability to deploy rapidly** during the most critical window of opportunity has traditionally been one of the most vexing operational challenges for United Nations peacekeeping.

- **French-speaking troops and police** are needed, as most peacekeepers are deployed in francophone environments. In those environments, the United Nations lacks the capability to deploy a sufficient number of uniformed contingents who can adequately interact with the local population, a critical element of civilian protection and early peacebuilding.
- **The deployment of women in 15 per cent of our staff officer and military observer positions** was established as a goal in 2016. We also established the goal of doubling the number of female police and military peacekeepers by 2020. With the strong and sustained support of Member States, we hope to ultimately be able to reach those figures, particularly through the contribution of female engagement teams and enhanced training programmes targeting women officers.

Training and capacity-building challenges

8. Deploying forces that meet our performance and conduct standards is a critical component of filling capability gaps. This begins with proper training. Member States have consistently maintained that training is the primary responsibility of Member States. Moreover, with 128 troop- and police-contributing countries, more than 15 missions and around 110,000 personnel that rotate at a rate of approximately 95,000 per year, there are limitations to the support the Secretariat can provide, in terms of the direct provision of training as well as the coordination of targeted training. In general, the needs of troop- and police-contributing countries are varied, as the approaches, resources and capacities of national military and police institutions differ vastly from one country to another.

9. Knowledge and skills learned in training need to be refreshed regularly. Equipment, as well, cannot be sustained without appropriate systems for maintenance, repair and the acquisition of spare parts. However, training and capacity-building activities are often viewed as one-off activities rather than as sustainable and specialized tools to enhance operational effectiveness throughout the mission life cycle. Consequently, training peacekeepers just before deployment and providing equipment for their tour will not deliver self-sufficient training capacities.

10. Previous attempts to create a centralized mechanism to coordinate and strengthen training and capacity-building, for example the Group of Eight Africa Clearing House, have not met with success, with challenges having been encountered by both the providers and the recipients of the training. Some troop- and police-contributing countries are reluctant to provide broadly comprehensive assessments of their training needs. Equally, providers of bilateral training support can also be reluctant to share information or entertain requests to deviate from their planned activities to further United Nations priorities.

11. United Nations core predeployment peacekeeping training provides important generic knowledge and skills, but mission-specific and specialist training has become more important, especially as more units require local knowledge and situational awareness to effectively achieve their mandated tasks. Opportunities for successful matchmaking between providers and recipients to fill such capability gaps are instead best realized through targeted engagement to develop partnerships around specific missions and/or countries or to address specific capabilities. This approach is consistent with the more strategic approach to force generation that the Secretariat has adopted in the past three years. However, those needs can be met only if troop- and police-contributing countries provide accurate and timely assessments of their existing military and police capabilities and gaps in training for both mission-specific professional skills and United Nations-specific skills.

12. Despite the progress made in filling gaps, the scale of the capacity, training and conduct challenges that face many of our troop- and police-contributing countries is too great to be addressed through the resources of the Secretariat. At present, most of the Secretariat's capacity-building activities related to peacekeeping, including those by the Integrated Training Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support and the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell, are funded through extrabudgetary support. The support account for peacekeeping operations continues to be under downward pressure, and the lack of sustainable resources continues to curtail our efforts to support training and capacity-building. Since 2009/10, the training budget of the Integrated Training Service has been reduced from \$2,697,950 to \$1,221,418, or 55 per cent, and one military training post has been cut. The reduction in funding has removed all institutionalized support for peacekeeping leadership training, which is now funded by voluntary Member State contributions or levies on peacekeeping missions. It has also reduced the capacity of the Service to provide support to Member States and field missions. At the same time, Member States are asking the United Nations to do more to coordinate capacity-building, develop training materials, ensure conduct and discipline standards and deliver training to troop- and police-contributing countries. Thus, the increasing requirements on the part of both financial contributors and uniformed peacekeepers are not matched by increasing resources for the support account. While we have had some success in raising voluntary contributions to support capacity-building, those contributions have been focused on tightly defined initiatives, such as the senior mission leaders course, the Regional Training and Conference Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, or triangular partnerships.

Continuous efforts in filling existing gaps

Strategic force generation

13. A critical element of our consistent strategic engagement has been the integral role of Security Council members in defining and helping us to meet the capability requirements of our missions. Several members of the Council have hosted high-level meetings, pledged and prepared new capabilities, offered training and capacity-building support and provided financial and political support to our strategic force generation efforts. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have collaborated closely with Member States to organize the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in 2015 and subsequent ministerial-level meetings in 2016 and 2017. Those high-level meetings focused attention on peacekeeping capability gaps at the highest political levels and produced positive global momentum for the peacekeeping partnership. The recent United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial, held in Canada in November, resulted in 46 Member States making new military and police pledges to United Nations peacekeeping, including some that fill key capability gaps of such enablers as aviation resources, quick-reaction forces and medical capabilities. Some Member States also announced contributions of rapidly deployable military and police units.

14. The high-level meetings enable us to generate a large pool of potential military and police capabilities that can subsequently be prepared for deployment through a new mechanism called the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System. The System replaced the defunct United Nations Standby Arrangements System in July 2015 to ensure a higher degree of readiness and more timely deployment of quality peacekeeping capabilities. The Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System now serves as a central component of the United Nations strategic force generation efforts and enables systematic verification and assessment to enhance the operational readiness of pledged capabilities before consideration for deployment. Together, the

high-level events and the System have given the United Nations a repository of known, available military and police capabilities that can be called on to fill gaps in missions as they arise and field a new peacekeeping mission more quickly. As it relates to the work of the Security Council, the System can give greater visibility on current capability reserves as mandates are being drafted or renewed. Clear, prioritized mandates that reflect the available capabilities will also enable us to better assess the performance of uniformed capabilities and strengthen the dialogue among the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat.

15. Assessment and advisory visits, a component of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, improve the Secretariat's understanding of Member State capabilities and troop- and police-contributing countries' understanding of requirements. Assessment and advisory visits enable the United Nations to select peacekeeping units that best meet the needs of specific operating environments. Since March 2016, 39 such visits have been conducted to assess 105 units registered in the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System. During those visits, teams have held discussions with military and political officials, leading to the pledging of several new capabilities, such as attack helicopters. Such visits also enhance constructive engagement with troop- and police-contributing countries at the national capital level on performance and conduct expectations.

16. The Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System and the assessment and advisory visits can uncover capability shortfalls in pledged units, allowing the Secretariat to coordinate and target training and capacity-building support, including with bilateral capacity-building providers. The System has also served as a vehicle for the Secretariat to plan co-deployment partnerships in which Member States team up to provide a specific capability, such as a multinational rotation system, to provide a high-value enabler on a continuous basis. The C-130 aircraft rotation in MINUSMA has been a successful test case for this approach, and it is being built on to develop rotation options for other high-value enablers in limited supply, such as helicopters.

17. MINUSMA also illustrates the importance of complementing high-level meetings with mission-specific force generation events for missions with persistent capability gaps. The MINUSMA force generation conference held in May 2017 enabled a more interactive and longer-term approach to force generation to fill persistent capability gaps in the mission. Member States were able to plan future contributions to Mali, encourage further discussion on joint partnerships and enable a more collaborative approach to related key issues, such as the provision of qualified staff officers and addressing training gaps and equipment needs.

18. Central to the Secretariat's efforts is the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell. It was established in March 2015 in response to the need for a more forward-looking, coordinated and sustained approach to the generation of important uniformed capabilities for peacekeeping operations, including with respect to training. This need was highlighted as well in the 2015 report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations ([A/70/95-S/2015/446](#)). The main objectives of the Cell are to ensure strategic Secretariat engagement with Member States on their potential peacekeeping contributions and to support systematic planning for future peacekeeping capability needs. This includes close engagement with the Integrated Training Service, which plays a leading role in Member State engagement on training standards, delivery of training and the provision of expertise and internal coordination on training standards for United Nations peacekeeping.

Targeted training engagement

19. Our targeted training takes several different forms, depending on the topic and the most suitable mode of delivery. The Integrated Training Service provides targeted

training for troop- and police-contributing countries to institutionalize United Nations training standards into their national institutions. Those efforts focus primarily on the training of trainers, including through mobile training team visits. A pilot centre for the training of trainers, supported solely by voluntary contributions, was established in Entebbe in 2016. It focuses on training those who conduct the United Nations staff officer course and was established following the receipt of feedback from force commanders revealing deficiencies in military staff officer performance. The centre has also conducted training-of-trainers programmes on the design of in-mission exercises, the protection of civilians, training materials to complement military unit manuals, a course for military gender advisers, a course for military sector commanders and courses for United Nations police.

20. Targeted training support is being provided through triangular partnership projects in the areas of engineering and signals, financed by extrabudgetary contributions. In the area of engineering, the partnership arrangement has trained more than 170 personnel from African countries with the help of 91 trainers from various Member States. Over 75 per cent of the graduates of the 2016 engineering course are already conducting training in their home countries. The United Nations Signals Academy project is enhancing the preparedness of military and police signals personnel to be deployed to peacekeeping missions through the provision of standardized, mission-specific hands-on training on United Nations-owned information and communications technology equipment and standard operating procedures. So far, more than 2,000 United Nations signals experts have been trained, including 113 women, some of whom have already been deployed.

21. Another targeted training initiative that has proven its effectiveness is the eLearning programme on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, with one course aimed at all United Nations personnel (civilian and uniformed) and a second course at managers and commanders. The programme has been mandatory for all Secretariat staff at headquarters duty stations and field locations as from May 2017. More than 7,400 personnel had completed the course by October. The courses were also made available for predeployment training. Early feedback has been positive, with personnel commending the clarity and usefulness of the content and visuals.

Recommendations

Force generation and capabilities

22. Enhanced strategic force generation is one of the ways that we can achieve my reform vision to help ensure that the United Nations is more nimble, pragmatic and flexible in its ability to plan, launch and manage a range of operations. Blending the right skills and capabilities for a timely response to specific needs on the ground is critical for ensuring that United Nations peacekeeping remains a tailored, agile and adaptable tool. Despite the substantial progress made in recent years to strengthen our approach and develop partnerships with Member States to fill capability gaps, there are inevitable limitations and some capability gaps that remain to be filled. Chiefly, the United Nations is dependent on the capabilities that Member States are willing to provide to it, and the domestic political will to contribute those capabilities is not easily influenced by the Secretariat or the Security Council. Therefore, we will need to continue to enhance our collective efforts and be creative to fill some of our widest gaps. This will of course involve troop- and police-contributing countries themselves investing in more training and better equipment to maintain United Nations standards and adapt to new operating environments.

23. Forward-looking mission-specific force generation events for missions with persistent capability gaps will continue and evolve on the basis of the lessons learned

so far. Coordination between the providers and recipients of training in filling those gaps has been achieved through targeted engagement in developing partnerships for specific missions and/or countries or to address specific gaps. This is vital to the success of critical missions and new and creative ways of generating and sustaining the required capabilities are needed.

24. In the area of aviation, a working group has been established as part of the Uniformed Capabilities Development Steering Group to better define the exact challenges troop-contributing countries face with regard to contributing helicopters and to look for new and innovate ways to generate helicopter capacity.

Training and capacity-building

25. There is a need to improve the coordination of training and capacity-building to further enhance the outcome of our strategic force generation efforts. Such efforts should also be more closely linked to the force generation process under the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System so that trained troop- and police-contributing country contingents and personnel with the right capabilities and equipment are deployed to peacekeeping missions. To this end, I propose the establishment of a light coordination mechanism that would bring together Secretariat entities involved in training, capacity-building and force generation, potential troop- and police-contributing countries that would benefit from training and capacity-building, and Member States that can provide the necessary support, resulting in the deployment of pre-trained units and personnel to peacekeeping operations. This coordination mechanism would be limited to matching troop- and police-contributing countries registered in the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System with Member States willing to provide support for further bilateral, or where relevant, trilateral, engagement.

26. To support a wider range of initiatives, meet multiple and sometimes unforeseen capacity-building and training needs and make training and capacity-building support sustainable for the longer term, I propose to establish another mechanism to supplement the recommendation described above: a pooled, multi-donor grant as part of the existing Department of Peacekeeping Operations trust fund. The grant would augment existing resources for the coordination and delivery of additional targeted and sustained training support for troop- and police-contributing countries and increase our flexibility in responding quickly to priority emerging issues. It would also support more sustainable strategic engagement with troop- and police-contributing countries, including capability- and mission-specific force generation and assessment and advisory visits. An additional more flexible and responsive mechanism may be required to support a wider range of initiatives and meet multiple and sometimes unforeseen capacity-building and training needs.

27. Targeted capacity-building efforts must also continue, with the recognition that some types of capabilities are more urgent priorities than others. Triangular partnership arrangements should be expanded by identifying other capacities that may be needed, as encouraged by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. The triangular partnership projects should be expanded to include additional geographical regions, additional enabling capabilities and francophone countries. Ongoing work on medical standards is being buoyed through a partnership of interested Member States. Coordinated by the Secretariat, those Member States provide funding, expertise, convening capacity and training to help improve the medical capabilities deployed to peacekeeping missions.

28. The constant turnover of personnel should be addressed by directing both United Nations and bilateral training support as far “upstream” as possible, for example by conducting training-of-trainers courses to build self-sustaining national capacity and

including United Nations-specific training in the normal professional training curriculum for commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

29. With Member States being the primary provider of training and capacity-building resources, I recommend that bilateral training support provided to troop- and police-contributing countries be focused on building national training capacity and ideally be delivered in the troop- or police-contributing country itself. Fortunately, several Member States have already undertaken, or have pledged to undertake, such activities in support of countries contributing troops or police to specific missions. Those offers were developed with input from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support and circulated to Member States by the Integrated Training Service. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support will continue to provide technical support to Member States and advice on where to provide support. I also encourage Member States to continue to provide voluntary contributions to triangular partnerships in the areas of engineering and signals, to sexual exploitation and abuse training programmes and to the training-of-trainers centre, in support of either the centre itself or specific programmes. Lastly, I urge Member States to either make voluntary contributions to support translation or to undertake translations for the United Nations using national resources.

30. With regard to conduct and discipline and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, there is a need to build on existing initiatives and address gaps in the training of troop- and police-contributing country personnel. Based on a draft training programme for National Investigation Officers being developed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Department of Field Support, support is sought to complete the development, piloting and roll-out of the programme.

31. Strengthening dialogue with troop- and police-contributing countries on performance will also be critical. We must fully implement our performance and conduct requirements, including through enforcement of appropriate training, equipment and performance standards. The leadership of the Security Council is essential in this regard. In instances where action must be taken to address underperformance or misconduct, we rely on the consistent support of the Council, the General Assembly and Member States. Our collective goal must be to achieve a virtuous performance loop in which we collectively strive for excellence in newly generated capabilities, current contributions and future rotations. Underpinning this effort is a partnership among the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries based on frank dialogue and supported by real-time information and quantifiable data analysis. Accordingly, troop- and police-contributing countries must proactively seek to implement systematic corrective measures in a timely fashion.

32. Ensuring that every United Nations peacekeeping mission is supported by troops and police who are properly trained, equipped, led and motivated, rotation after rotation, is a significant challenge that will require more partnerships, resources and time to overcome. Much progress has been made over the past few years, but much work remains to be done. The Secretariat, for its part, will further enhance its ongoing work on strategic force generation and targeted training support. I look to Member States to partner with us, inter alia, through bilateral training efforts and triangular partnerships with the Secretariat, to redouble efforts to ensure that every troop- and police-contributing country that needs support and capacity-building for peacekeeping receives it. I look forward to hearing feedback and more ideas from Security Council members, troop- and police-contributing countries and other Member States in the days and weeks ahead as to how we can jointly ensure that our peacekeeping operations are effective.